

CHRIST'S INTERCESSION

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The following is excerpted from *The Tabernacle, the Priesthood, the Offerings* by I.M. (Isaac Massey) Haldeman, 1925. Haldeman was the pastor of First Baptist Church of New York City for nearly 50 years, from 1884-1933. Though Haldeman did not have advanced formal theological training, he made up for this with a high native intellect, excellent gifts, a passion for Jesus Christ, a love for God's Word, diligent study habits, and a broad appetite for learning under the Headship of Christ. In recognition of this he was awarded an honorary D.D. from William Jewel College in 1909. He was a theological warrior who did not draw back from the public reproof of modernists and other false teachers, speaking against fellow Baptists such as Harry Emerson Fosdick and against Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah Witness cult. He was a crusader against worldliness in the churches. Bible teacher James M. Gray called him "the greatest prophet of the Lord now standing in any pulpit in this country." Said to be "the most influential preacher of prophetic themes in his generation," he interpreted Bible prophecy literally and emphasized the imminent return of Christ.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:25-27).

What an amazing fact it is, that He who is the Master of Heaven and earth prays for us--and prays in Heaven on the throne of the Highest.

It may not be that He is praying for just the things we wish, nor even such we dream we need, but the fact that He is praying for us is beyond definition of all it demonstrates of interest in, of grace and care for us.

Believe He is praying for us, and what matter the cloud-covered sky, the tempest swirling and uprooting all things we hold dear, leaving us neither root nor ranch in those things; what matter though we stand with hands folded, hands of helplessness, and the fragments of shattered plans scattered at our feet; what matter though our soul be filled with darkness and our lips be dumb and faith shivers and begins to grope and at times stops and listens to subtle questions filled with a hiss, the hiss of the serpent; what matter that at its worst if, through it all and at the last, we can believe, and will believe in spite of every in creeping fear, that He is yonder back of storm or woe praying for us, interceding for us?

To believe that, gives assurance He will meet us in the blessing such as never could have come had the answer been in response to our own poor, blind, unthinking and wholly selfish prayer.

How often we escape sickness, disease, the assault of circumstance and sudden death because He has prayed, has interceded on our behalf and caused the special providences to be swung over us and along our path, we shall never know till the record of it is read to us when we stand face to face with Him in the glory hour.

If there are times when faith would sink and sink as in the anguish of a drowning soul and then suddenly rises as on a swelling tide which lifts us out of the deeps of dark distress till we find firm footing on the shore of peace and rest again in His Word and truth, it is because He prays for us, because He neither slumbers nor sleeps nor closes His eyelids, but open-eyed and watchful bears us on His heart and lifts us in unfailing petition before the Father's throne" (I.M. Haldeman).

Before Peter stumbled and fell the Lord prayed for him. He told him frankly the Devil desired him that he might sift him as wheat.

It is very startling if you read the record. He did not tell Peter He had prayed for him that he might escape the Devil's assault and snare. Not at all.

On the contrary, He assured him the Devil would succeed in ensnaring and overthrowing him. He prayed for Peter, but for just one thing. He prayed that his faith might not fail. He said, 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not' (Luke 22:32).

Peter went down into the black pit the Devil had prepared for him. The Devil used Peter's infirmity, his self-consciousness, his boasting, and then filled him with fear and arrant cowardice, so that in the hour of trial he marked himself and that hour with indelible shame.

Peter denied his Lord.

He denied Him because he feared he might lose his life if he confessed Him. It would have been hard to have done worse than that.

But the Lord looked at Peter; faith responded to the look and to the prayer that had been offered beforehand. The Lord's look was the emphasis of His anticipative prayer. Out of the darkness Peter came back to be more loyal and more devoted than before, with triumphant faith, but chastened soul. ...

What grace, what assurance is that. Again and again when the believer is on the edge where it seems the next step would make him slip, plunge and fall into the black abyss of unbelief, there comes as directly out of Heaven itself a touch of power that repudiates even the thought of doubt or question and gives him a vigor of faith such as he never dreamed ever could be his.

Yonder at the throne He has seen our special need and prayed for us. ..

Our Lord as High priest, not only lifts up His prayers in our behalf, but takes our own prayers and presents them like incense before the Father's throne.

Scripture gives us a very dramatic illustration how He does this. As it is written:

‘And another angel came and stood at the altar, (the altar of incense shown in heaven) having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne’ (Revelation 8:3).

What a picture that is. Like that angel the Lord takes the prayers of the believer and presents them before God in the fragrance of His high priestly character and on the basis of His perfect sacrifice.

Without His intercession not a single petition of ours would ever ascend to the Court of Heaven. No prayer of ours would ever reach the Father. He says so, ‘No man cometh unto the Father, but by me’ (John 14:6).

As the horns of the golden altar of incense were stained once a year with the blood of atonement from the brazen altar (Exodus 30:10), so the priesthood of Christ and His work of intercession on our behalf rest wholly in the blood of the cross. His priestly intercession for the believer on the basis of that blood is a demonstration that the blood has been applied, has been accepted on our behalf, and we are accounted with our Lord as members of the family of God.

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